




OUNC

OR

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Charivaria

It is being realized in the Reich that Allied action is seriously limiting the number of neutral countries where German technicians can unsettle.

It is announced that railway carriages this coming winter will be lighted so that passengers can easily see each others' faces. We were afraid of that.



"Increased laundry charges are quite justified," says a writer. "The public does not expect laundries to lose money." Oh, no. Only laundry.

The Italian soldiers on the Eastern Front are doing well. So far they haven't done anything, but the Russians are interested in their proposition.

Crying for the Moon
"Sweet cook and assistant sweet cook required."
Advt. in Gloucestershire Paper.

It is claimed that America is building ships faster than at any time in history. Still, Dr. GOEBBELS can sink them faster than that.

It appears that Signor MUSSOLINI does not know what to do about the growing unrest in Italy. Hadn't he better ring up the boss?

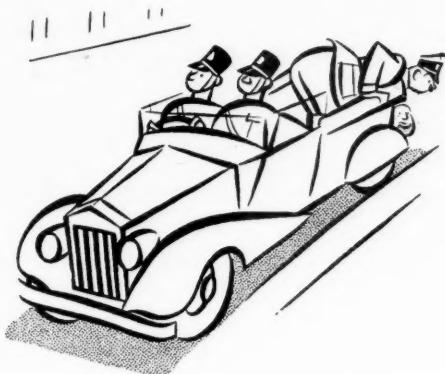
The B.B.C. has a new interval signal. So has Radio Deutschlandsender.

HITLER, we are told, has always been jealous of the dashing Russian military leaders. The FUEHRER would have decided inferiority complex if suddenly confronted with Marshal BUDYONNY's moustache.



It is reported that the German people are beginning to be apprehensive that it will be a long war. Dr. GOEBBELS will doubtless explain to them that after all a long war is just a few glorious blitzkriegs joined together.

An American actress has had her face lifted three times. So much for the theory that a woman is only young once or twice.



Bacchanalia
"Even if vegetables are scarce we can all get canned."
Schoolgirl's Essay.

Herr HITLER recently complained to his chauffeur about a little squeak in the back of the car. Could it have been Signor MUSSOLINI by any chance?

The Passionate Lover

IF I were lord of the hills and rivers,
If I were king of the field and plain,
Cattle that browse and the oat that quivers,
Night and the noon and the falling rain,
If I had words not wild to utter
If I had dreams not wrong to dream
Day after day I would bring you butter—
Butter, my dear, and cream.

Could I command the rolling thunder
Quench the light of the glittering stars,
Break the gyves of the flesh asunder
And soar in spirit beyond the bars,
Out of this song of shreds and patches
I would make oranges sour and sweet,
And a twisted pin, and a box of matches,
And lay them down at your feet.

Were I the Warden of all the Marches,
Had I the whole wide earth in fee,
Cities of men, and their towers and arches,
Caves and mines and the roaring sea,
If hope were more than a madman's mockings
Echoed on air to the heart that begs
You should have onions—you should have stockings—
You should have eggs. EVOE.

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Holiday Task

HOW do you feel about the prospect of forgetting the present alphabet and learning an entirely unprecedented one of forty-two new letters? Eager? On your toes? Alert? Brisk?

It is an idea of Mr. Bernard Shaw's. He expounds it in his long new preface to the shilling (Guild Books) edition of Professor R. A. Wilson's *The Miraculous Birth of Language*; with which, so far as I can see, it does not have very much to do.

But you will agree that it is a splendid notion. The case is overwhelming, as Mr. Shaw says, for the reduction to the lowest possible figure of "the prodigious total of manual labor on literature, journalism and commercial correspondence that has to be done every day." He has worked out that the new alphabet, once adopted, would save over 26 per cent. in "paper, ink, wear and tear of machinery, compositors' time, machinists' time, and authors' time." You may say that the time and effort incidental to the popularization and establishment of the new alphabet will equal if not outweigh the time and effort necessary to keep the old one going for a bunch of eons; but I know *you*, you're just an old figure-juggler, set and fixed in your ways and unwilling to take a Saturday afternoon off to learn eighteen new vowels and twenty-four new consonants.

You should look at me. Goodness knows I have enough on my mind already, but I have been thinking quite deeply about this question; in the intervals of being carried away by my involuntary and half-unconscious attempts to fill in a background for the "string of nonsense" Mr. Shaw sets forth on pages 26-27. This passage of rich prose is designed as a sort of test or work-out for the

new alphabet: "an alphabet which will spell it under these conditions" (one sound one letter, every letter unmistakably different) "will spell any English word well enough to begin with," he says. I should dearly love to quote it all and give these drab pages a treat, and I will at least proceed to reel off the first sentence, or argument:

Chang at leisure was superior to Lynch in his rouge, munching a lozenge at the burial in Merrion Square of Hyperion the Alien who valued his billiards so highly.

The plot thickens as it goes on: *Quick! quick! hear the queer story how . . .* But never mind. If you want to buy the film rights you'd better study it all.

I must say I like it myself. It sets bumbling about in my mind associations of a richness and complexity staggering to experience.

But life is not all play, even in war-time. We must leave this bright enamell'd landscape and set about considering some of the details of administration.

Myself, I think there will have to be a Permanent International Vowels Advisory Committee, with power to decide which vowels are which. When it's a question of the English language we can't concentrate exclusively on these islands; they may be the birthplace and hotbed of it, but the habit has spread about a good deal. We have to allow for infinite permutations of nationality and degree of aural sensitiveness. It's all very well to say that a particular written vowel should represent a particular sound always and exclusively; but you can't get half a dozen people even in the same family to pronounce exactly the same sound, by intention. You can pick out the identical sound from the speech of six people, yes; but you wouldn't get them all to spell it with the same letter. It's an undeniable fact that the pronunciation by many Australians of the word *our* is identical with the pronunciation by B.B.C. announcers of the word *air*; but do you want to start another fight so soon after the interval signal?

Mr. Shaw, admitting this, would contend that the trouble of explanation and the incidental black eyes will turn out to be worth it. Allowing for human frailty, it may take a long time; allowing for the recurrence of our reforming zeal in every later generation—an allowance seldom made by us reformers (we habitually assume that we are reformers because things are wrong, not because we were born with the itch to set things right)—something quite different will undoubtedly emerge in the end; but what I say is, let it. What are we, men or mice?

I'm not quite sure about the way the new alphabet is to be popularized. Mr. Shaw recommends that it be used "side by side with the old lettering until the better ousts the worse." That this means everything is to be printed twice as on a bilingual notice-board doesn't seem very likely (do 174 per cent. of your work now, so that your descendants a century hence may be able to manage with 74 per cent. Ha! Is this the way we are paying for the war, *Posterity, old boy?*). No, I think it must mean that every printed work will contain a proportion of passages that Mr. Shaw and I will go round trying to get people to make the effort to read.

Nevertheless, as he says, the colossal waste of time and material under the present system is alone gigantic enough "to bring about a reform so costly, so unpopular, and requiring so much mental effort as the introduction of a new alphabet and a new orthography."

Of course there is a school of thought that contends the line of least resistance to be the key to all behaviour, and that a reform costly, unpopular and requiring much mental effort or much effort of any kind by everybody



VULCAN AND VENUS OR THE FORGING OF VICTORY



"I had a letter from Margaret in Africa this morning. She's very anxious about us and thinks we're wonderful."

never does come about; but if you think that, you might as well be Hyperion the Alien, or Chang, or that old lozenge-muncher Lynch. You might as well shiver over the fire all day lingering in a tangle of tactless empty instincts ineptly swallowing quarts of stingo (I didn't quote that bit before).

As for Mr. Shaw, he says "If the introduction of an English alphabet for the English language costs a civil war, or even, as the introduction of Summer Time did, a world war, I shall not grudge it."

We-e-e-e-all . . .

R. M.

Night Take-Off

BENEATH our wheels the flares and glim-lamps race,
Each gooseneck stretching taut, then only space
Descends as now the leading-lights are past
And three-dimensioned darkness holds us fast.
We are of night and night hugs close her own,
The long black caverns of her sleeves are thrown
Around us and she bids the circling clouds
Encompass us with vapour as with shrouds.

TO READERS OF PUNCH OVERSEAS LONDON CALLING

Wherever you may be, overseas, London calls you daily on the radio with the news from Britain—truthful, up-to-the-minute. The times and wavelengths for your own region are specially chosen, and full details of all forthcoming overseas programmes in English are transmitted from London, every Sunday morning, by special Morse Service to the British authorities nearest to you.

This information is freely available to the Press, and is supplied to local papers on request. Editors are not always aware of this English programme service, and if you cannot find the British programmes in the papers you read, they will be interested to know that you would like to see them—and how easily they can be obtained.

THEN PLEASE LISTEN—TO LONDON,
AND THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.



"Half a ton of baa and a Heinkel!"

Hoarder in Lambeth

"ULLO, Stusser, ole man," said Mr. Joseph Pinkin, as he opened the front door of 61, Cosham House, Lambeth. "Wez Mrs. S.? 'Ave you lorst 'er?" "Do I look like I'm celebratink?" Mr. Stusser demanded. "I dun't never lose Bella," he continued gloomily. "I lose som'think, is always a valuable."

"She 'asn't bin took ill, 'as she?" Mrs. Pinkin said, as the two men walked into the living-room.

"You ever know Bella nut one hondrid per cent. okay by health?" Mr. Stusser said.

"Ar," Mrs. Pinkin said, "she's alwers fit."

"Fightink fit," said Mr. Stusser, rubbing his head reminiscently. "Tillie called f'r us, and when a coupla ledgies meet they gotta weg the chains like they dun't hear no news since the bruntasaurus. So they com dreckly."

"Well, while we're waitin'," Mr. Pinkin said, "wot d' you say to a nice glass of beer?"

"Same like always," Mr. Stusser said—"planty room inside."

Mr. Pinkin filled two glasses. "'Ere's all you wish y'rself," he said.

Mr. Stusser raised his glass. "If only should com true all I'm wishink Bella too," he said. "Mondy, Toosdy, Wensdy, Thursdy, Fridy, she negs at me like I'm the beddest man in the wold."

"Wot about Satdy an' Sundy?" Mrs. Pinkin inquired.

"Vee-ends is spacial," said Mr. Stusser. "Vee-ends she negs like she's the beddest woman."

"Ar, well," Mr. Pinkin said, "marriage is a lott'ry, so I s'pose we can't all draw winnin' tickits."

"By gums!" said Mr. Stusser. "Someone runs soch a t'rifick lott'ry with soch a teeny few prizes, he should get fined twenty millions or be married to Bella."

The front door shut with a deafening slam.

"They're 'ere," Mrs. Pinkin said, "in case you 'adn't guessed."

Mrs. Stusser squeezed through the doorway. "Halloo, av'rybaddy," she said.

"Halloo, Bella," Mr. Stusser said meekly.

Mrs. Stusser glared at her husband. "Since how long you been av'rybaddy, Mister Mere Stusser?" she asked.

"Seuse me int'ruptin'," said Miss Tillie Pinkin, smoothing her Lamarr hair over her Loy eyebrows, "but there's no objection to a frien'ly atmosphere. This isn't a Gestarpo Social Evenin', y' know."

"Maybe p'raps I been a liddle hasty with Stusser," Mrs. Stusser conceded.

Mr. Stusser was suddenly shaken by a violent attack of coughing. "Maybe William Conqueror ten six six," he said.

"Not smokin', Mrs. S.?" Tillie inquired sweetly.

"No cig'rettes," Mrs. Stusser said, all her chins quivering with indignation. "Av'ry place is same old story: yesterdy they got planty, to-morrow they gettink planty. To-day they only got dippest regrats."

"They keep those under the counter too," said Mr. Pinkin. "All these 'ere 'oards're the trouble. The stocks some people's got you'd think they was all gointer be cent'arians."

"Exactly!" Tillie said. "People like that oughta be made to do nothin' but smoke twenny-six hours a day. Don't you agree, Mr. Stusser?"

"Absolute!" said Mr. Stusser. "With soch pipple should I be firm like two Gibraltars."

"Lissen to Mister Tough Guy!" Mrs. Stusser said. "Last Nowember I gotta oringe jelly just settink, when woomp comes a bomb—nut tramendous, just a liddle kid bomb. But does Mister Tough Guy Stusser jump six inches? Nunno! He jumps twalve inches, and falls abot in all diractions. Shucking! But my jelly sets firm and dun't even shake. Ugha!"

"Podden me," Mr. Stusser said. "Twanty-sevin years we been Mister and Missis. Is right?"

"Is all wronk," Mrs. Stusser said. "Is true though."

"Twanty-sevin years I survive it," said Mr. Stusser, "and I'm nut tough? Foo! I should have my way, hoarders should be punished drastical."

"After all that," Tillie said, "I don't know as I oughta offer anyone a fag, but—"

"You mean you *got* some?" Mr. Stusser said excitedly.

"Packits an' packits *an'* packits," Tillie said.

"You gotta nuncle runs a tobacco kosk maybe?" Mr. Stusser inquired.

Tillie smiled her favourite Inscrutable Smile of a Beautiful Spy. "Ahar!" she said.

"How many?" said Mr. Stusser.

"A hundrid," Tillie said.

"By gums!" said Mr. Stusser. "You smoke many yourself?"

"Twenny a week," Tillie said.

Mr. Stusser shook his head gravely. "Moch too many, he said. "You want so you dun't grow up?"

"It's on'y 'er body as they'll affect," Mr. Pinkin said. "Nothin' 'ud make no diff'rence to 'er brain, pore gel."

"You realise I got one, then," Tillie said.

"Seein' I'm y'r Dad, you was nacherally born wiv one," Mr. Pinkin said, "but I reckon you've bin 'cardin' that too."

"Tillie," said Mr. Stusser, "is terrible sirrious, hoarding



"Peggy, get back to your Bach!"

cig'rettes. You should sell them quick, also Mr. Churchill gets varry varry disappointed with you."

"Stusser's right," Mrs. Stusser said.

"Ouch!" said Mr. Stusser.

"Wotsa matter?" Mrs. Stusser demanded. "You gotta pain by the stomitch?"

"Nunno," Mr. Stusser said. "You say I'm right, so is netcheral I pinch myself in case I'm dreamink. But lissen, Tillie," he continued, "you oughta sell."

"Ten any use?" Tillie said.

"Foo!" said Mr. Stusser. "You sell tan, so wot you got left? Nut ninety. Nunno! Guilty cunsience. Tarrible! Liddle by liddle it nibbles you, so soon you got kang'roo nerves."

"Okay," Tillie said. "I'll 'ave ninety cig'rettes to soothe 'em."

"Lissen!" Mr. Stusser persisted. "You get *my* age, nobaddy dun't expect you should be perfick—but a yong *beautiful* woman, she should be absolute tip tops by morals."

"Fifty, then," Tillie said. "That'll ease me conscience a bit."

"Say a hondrid," Mr. Stusser urged, "so you'll give your cunsience a movvelous rest-cure."

"Seventy-five," Tillie said.

"Axuse me laughink," said Mr. Stusser. "A man steals twanty-five pounds, you think maybe the jutch says 'Okay,' bacause the man coulda stealed a hondrid? Nunno! Vickid is vickid."

"P'raps you're right," Tillie said. "You c'n 'ave the ruddy lot."

"Podden me, Tillie," Mrs. Stusser said. "Dun't I give you crudit when you buy clothes? You know so! So dun't you think you oughta sell the cig'rettes to som'baddy daservink?"

"But—" Mr. Stusser began.

Mrs. Stusser raised a warning finger. "Stusser," she said, "stup!"

Mr. Stusser stopped.

Tillie went into the hall and returned a moment later with the cigarettes.

"Stusser'll pay," Mrs. Stusser said. "My purse is home."

Mr. Stusser sighed. "One day maybe is jostice in the world," he said, "so I dun't pay f'r wot I dun't get."

"But it's owed you," Mrs. Pinkin said.

"Missis Pinkin," said Mr. Stusser, "even opologies she's owink me since ten years I dun't get." He held out three half-crowns.

"Give it straight to Mrs. S.," Tillie said. "That'll be som'mhin' off of wot I owe 'er f'r the green dress."

"Maybe you care to repay me, Bella?" Mr. Stusser said hopefully.

"Maybe," said Mrs. Stusser, taking a firm hold on the money. "Som day."

Mr. Stusser sank into a gloomy silence.

On the way home, however, he smiled timidly to himself. "By gums!" he said. "Even if I dun't never see the sevin-six you owe me, I still got a hondrid cig'rettes."

"I got 'em," Mrs. Stusser said.

"Me too," said Mr. Stusser. "I gotta secrift privit store behind the raddio."

"Nut prasent tanse," Mrs. Stusser said. "Past."

"You mean they've wanished?" Mr. Stusser said.

"Is a strickly moral man, is Mister Tough Guy," Mrs. Stusser said. "Dun't he say hoarders should get drastical punishment?"

Mr. Stusser agreed.

"So for hoardink cig'rettes and daceivink his wife, is only justice he should pay sevin-an'-six so his darlink Bella should have them," said Mrs. Stusser.

Mr. Stusser's comment added almost perceptibly to the blue of the evening sky.

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"On mounting Arthur's Seat I beheld what I thought was a lot of barrels in Younger's Brewery. Ah! they were the London Scottish!"—Letter in "Edinburgh Evening Dispatch."

Hooray!



SIGGS

"Do you mean to say you'd never noticed that if you drop a coin it usually falls in the turn-up of your trousers?"

Little Talks

BUT you're not *against* the Declaration of the Atlantic, surely?

I didn't say I was. I merely said I couldn't rave about it as some people do.

But didn't you think it was rather marvellous, the old boys strolling through the submarines to have an ocean-chat? All that Hitler and Musso can do is to take special trains to the end of their own back-yards.

Marvellous, I agree. Daring, drama, desirability—full marks. But one can be delighted about a wedding without approving of the bridegroom's speech. And it's generally better if he doesn't make one.

You mustn't be sniffy about "the Magna Carta of the Nations."

That's the most absurd thing that has been said yet. It's a great pity that so many people who write have no time to think. Magna Carta, for one thing, was full of detail. The Declaration—

Is only "principles."

Correct. *Magna Carta was reluctantly conceded, in the face of threats, by a tyrannical despot. Much of it was new stuff. The Declaration was gratuitously coughed up by two benevolent democracies. And nothing in it was new.*

What about "freedom from fear and want"?

Oh, no. D'you remember what King George V said about the Empire in 193—?

Don't be an ass. Of course I don't.

Well, I've quoted it enough. You ought to. He said: "In these days, when fear and preparation for war are again astir in the world, let us be thankful that peace and quiet government prevail over so large a part of the earth's surface, and that under our flag of freedom so many millions eat their daily bread, in far distant lands and climates, with none to make them afraid."

Jolly good show. But I don't see—

"Eat their daily bread . . . with none to make them afraid."

"Freedom from want and fear?"

Yes—and there's a lot more than that in that one sentence. So one thing I'd have added to the Eight Jolly Articles would have been: "Moreover, the undersigned democracies have some title to use the language of the Eight Jolly Articles because these have been not merely their principles but (wherever possible) their practices for a very long time—long before Schicklgrüber was born or thought of."

A little modest boasting?

Yes. By the way, do you remember

the fuss there was, some years ago, when I wrote an article to Punch about Hitler's real name being Schicklgrüber—the angry letters the Editor got about "vulgar abuse of a friendly foreign statesman," etcetera?

Queer world. But go on about Magna Carta.

Well, in the next place, *Magna Carta was a moral document, like the Ten Commandments. It said "To no man will we deny justice": it didn't say "the criminal shall go scot-free"! The Eight Jolly Articles make a great "spiritual" fanfare, but they lack morality: because they make no distinction between the wicked and the good—*

Except about disarmament.

Point 8. Yes. We take away the gangster's gun, but otherwise he's as good as you—and has the same prospects. There's no inducement to be virtuous because there's no penalty if you're not.

Ah, but you don't want to make the gangster an economic pariah, do you? You want him to be able to earn an honest living and pay the taxes?

Certainly. I accept Points 4 and 5. But that's self-interest, not morality. And even there I think we're making too many promises to be practical.

Who to?

Well (a) to the enemy and (b) to the knock-kneed neutrals. Look at Turkey and Spain and Sweden—and Eire—

Wobblers of the World, Unite!

Yes, that's what we want. But what is there in the Eight Jolly Articles to induce a single one of them to fall off the fence on the right side? We promise them—

We don't "promise" anything, do we? The two Big Boys say they "deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world."

*That's right—in form. But in fact we're hopelessly committed—unless Parliament repudiates the thing. After all this talk about *Magna Carta* you can hardly say that it was a purely academic what's-it's-name. And so, I say again, we've promised the knock-kneed neutrals that, whatever happens, they can have the same territory, choose the same government, have equal access to our raw material, two nice crackers each, and the fairy off the top of the Christmas-tree. Whatever happens, they've nothing to fear from us. But Hitler is threatening to knock their blocks off. "So what?" they say—and you can't blame 'em.*

Well, what's your amendment? I don't think I'd alter a word of the "Principles" themselves. But I'd add a sort of codicil or proviso covering the whole caboodle—something like this:

"Though these are the sincere aims and aspirations of the undersigned democracies, it must not be supposed, nor would it be proper, that at the close of hostilities, in a world impoverished and weakened by war, the benefits named can accrue with the same swiftness or even in the same measure to every nation. It would be a negative of true morality and justice if, for example, the Rumanians were to find themselves at once as well-favoured and placed as the Greeks or the Dutch. It will take time to rebuild the world: and those who have led or assisted the forces of Evil or feebly abstained from the conflict must not expect too high a place in the order of priorities."

Golly!

Well, apart from morals, look where you'll be landed if you don't have something like that. We're promising—or seem to be—all sorts of things we may not be able to perform. In Article 6 we talk, as usual, about "the final destruction of Nazi tyranny." But in Article 3 we "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." Do we really mean that—about the Huns? How do we know that after the war they won't choose another belligerent lunatic to govern them?

They always do. But still, they'll be disarmed.

They were disarmed before. But that didn't stop them from choosing Hitler—and liking him. One way of stopping that might be to split the Huns up into separate pens—or, anyhow, to segregate Prussia. I don't know about that. But the Eight Jolly Articles (Number Two) have already ruled that out.

You mean "No territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned . . .?"

Yes. Then look at Article 1. We "seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other." Yes—but we may have "aggrandisement" thrust upon us. Are we, for example, going to hand back Libya to the tender mercies of the Wops?

God forbid! that will have to be a "mandate" or something.

All right. Like Palestine and so on. But all our "mandates," tiresome or not, have always been regarded as bits of grab by the other fellow—and in the next Peace they'll be regarded as "aggrandisement."

You mean we're storing up trouble in the future for the sake of "propaganda" now?

I certainly do. You'll have the same old tale again. "Yah! You didn't defeat us fairly. You promised us a lot of things and so we stopped fighting. Now you're not doing what you promised. Yah!"

Also "Yah! Now you can't blame us if we choose another belligerent lunatic to rule us"?

Exactly.

But I suppose we must hold out a carrot or two to the decent Germans?

Why? If they're really decent they'll throw Hitler out because it's the decent thing to do, without any promises from us.

And if they're not?

Why promise them anything—except more and more unpleasantness, unless they throw out Hitler and stop the war? The only thing I'd promise the Hun is defeat. After that—and after he's been made to understand that—we can talk—and be as noble and woolly as you like. But this time he must be walloped—and admit it.

But don't you think the old Declaration has done a lot of good?

Where? I observe, with interest, that since the Eight Jolly Articles all the Chronic Neutrals have remained precisely where they were—on the fence. They know a nice two-ways bet when they see it.

Iran?

We invaded Iran.

A. P. H.

Phone Order

THE Section Commander was detained that night on "urgent civilian duties." Over a trunk line he had read to Corporal Harris his notes of special orders given at the last N.C.O.s' meeting.

"There will be an inspection by the C.O. to-morrow at 1400 hours," Corporal Harris read out. Like everyone else, I detest inspections. But they are not among the parades one can dodge, except by being on an instructional course; and when the details for courses had been read out I knew that I was unlucky.

Corporal Harris looked down at his notes. "One more thing about to-morrow," he said: "we want a volunteer."

Ever since I first read of Horatius I have wanted to out-step. I took two paces forward and stood to attention. The Corporal ordered me back to the ranks. "We want a volunteer," he repeated. I stepped forward again.

"I'm volunteering," I explained. "Oh, all right," he said. "But there's no need to keep darting about like a mad snake. We want a volunteer"—he turned over the page of his notes—"for the Black and Killick."

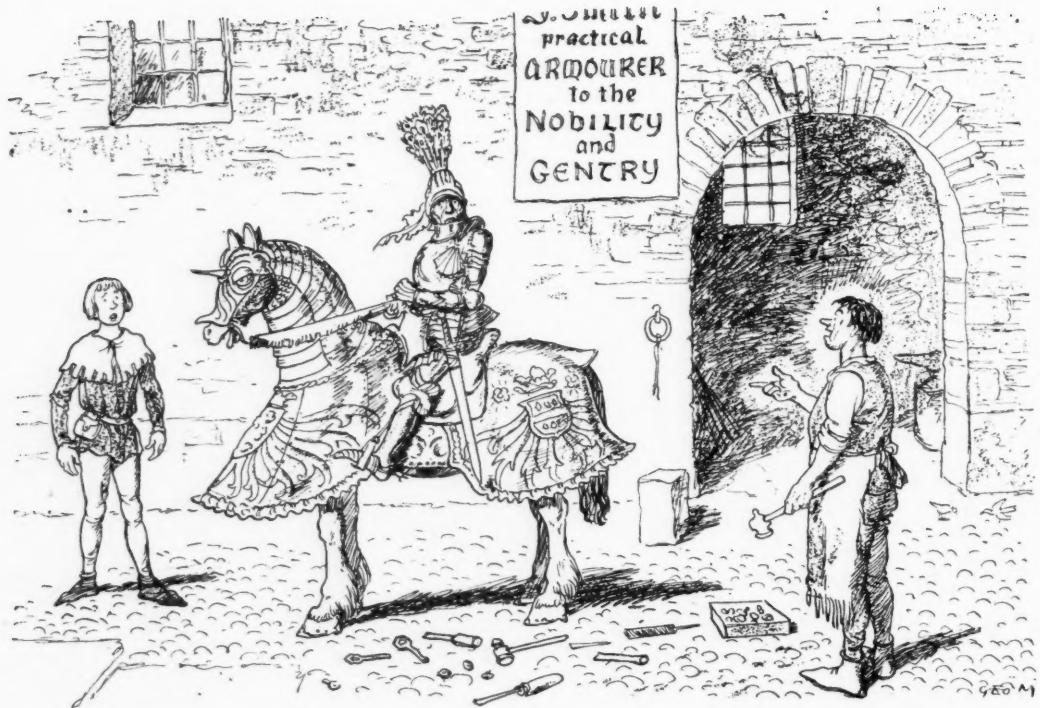
It didn't mean much to me, but of course new weapons are invented every day. "An anti-tank gun, perhaps," I suggested. "Probably," said the Corporal. "With a tendency to premature bursts," he added hopefully. "You'll parade with the other instruction men to-morrow."

When we reached the local barracks the various classes—Mills, Browning, Northover and the rest—were marched off and I was left alone on the parade-ground. A sergeant asked me what I was. "Black and Killick," I said. The sergeant said he had never heard of it, and told me to wait.

One always feels the necessity to be circumspect at the barracks of the regulars, but after an hour I stood myself at ease. Three hours later a sergeant-major came and asked me what I thought I was doing there. When he heard he said there was no such weapon and I had better go home.

As I drew near the Guard Room I met the rest of the Section returning from the inspection. They told me in dejected tones that the Colonel was displeased: the Section had been called a disgrace to the Battalion. "There's a new Standing Order out," they said; "every other Section had obeyed it, but it never got to us—we knew nothing about it." "What did you do wrong?" I asked. "We still wore our brown leggings," they said. "The order given at the N.C.O.s' meeting was for black anklets."





"And I can assure you, my Lord, nothing but a direct hit . . ."

"Elevenes"

ALTHOUGH it's a whole-time, nay, an overtime job
Ridding the earth of Mr. Schicklemebob,
Although our world is all at sixes and sevens,
There'll always be an "elevenes."
Here in this city where sparkling waters run
And the Roman tub is less revered than the bun
(Lord Woolton must have his fun)—
Here, if we're able
To snatch a table,
Let's sit and, thanks to a bountiful bean,
Survey the scene.
Useless to call or beckon or even whistle a waiter;
We are the waiters now, he the dictator.
Dotted around are elderly hearties and smarties
Giving their coffee-parties;
Grimly, gaily and daily
Holding the fort,
Whatever the ration report
Or the latest pranks of "that man."
Here are evacuees, blitzees and billettees,
An obvious Monte, a patent Le Touquet, a palpable Cannes—
Some that have travelled by Blue Train,
Others by Crewe train—

Men from the Services, Foam-guards and Home Guards,
civilian officials,
ATSies and WAAFies and other go-to-it initials;
Here is a bevy of beauty—to-morrow perhaps they'll be
"Bevinses"—
Meanwhile, there's "elevenes";
And over there in the corner (fifth table up),
Sipping a garrulous cup,
Nibbling a bellicose bun,
Sits Public War-wagger Number One—
The genesis
(So it is whispered) of Menaces.
The air boils with the bubbling vibrations
Of innumerable confabulations,
Against which a full-blooded Strauss
Steals from the radio like a mouse.
Let's see if we can't get a slant
On the hubbub; that clever-faced woman in blue
(Next table) may give us a clue—
The one who is deep in a chat
With that dame in the bombed-looking hat.
Let's hitch up our hearing a peg . . .
"My dear, what I love is an EGG."



POOR PROPAGANDA

"What do you mean by letting that out? Don't you realize that I'm the only member of my family in Germany?"

The Post

BY the post I mean the letters, parcels and so on which people watch other people getting at breakfast, and it is brought, as you know, by a postman; and before I say anything else I want my readers to do a few minutes' disinterested thinking about postmen. It is so difficult to think disinterestedly about postmen that I dare say most of you have never realized till now that it is not the *postman* who decides on what morning we are to get any letters, but the *post office*. Putting it another way, even if we ourselves were to become postmen we should go on getting just as few letters and parcels as before, while other people get just as many. I want to make this clear because it lies at the root of the public's attitude towards postmen.

The public's attitude towards postmen may, indeed, be summed up as extraordinarily typical of human nature. In defining it science has had to search round and borrow a phrase from the School Certificate branch of English Literature and describe it as an instance of the pathetic fallacy. This, you may remember, is applied in literature to the way poets make flowers think what the poets think the flowers ought to be thinking because the poets are, but science saw that it did even better for what people think postmen are thinking as they come up the path or go down it. It is fairly safe to assume that any people watching any postman coming up a path are thinking that he is thinking that he has tied all those letters up with string because they are all for each of these people; while any people watching a postman going *down* a path are thinking that he is thinking it was a good idea making up that dummy packet, and he must try it again to-morrow; whereas, for all we know, a postman walking up or down a path never thinks anything except what an ordinary person dressed as a postman and walking up and down a path would be thinking. (I don't mean, of course, that a postman *is* an ordinary person, because no one dressed up as anything is: People have tried to make him out to be one by telling each other that he must have fun reading postcards, but no one believes that he *does* read them.)

Now we get to what happens when the postman has reached the front door. If there is a slit in the door, with a flap which has jammed down because people keep meaning to mend the

spring, then the postman pushes the letters through the slit, knocks or rings or bangs according to whether there is a bell or a knocker or just a door, and either walks away or stays on the doorstep because he has a very dull parcel of someone else's clothes from the cleaner's. If, on the other hand, there is no slit in the door, then he rings or knocks or bangs just the same, and one of the people in the house goes to the door and opens it. This sounds straightforward enough, but actually a considerable layer of fairly unconscious motive has decided which person in the house is going to open the door; some people, the active kind who are good at shopping, having an idea that if they open the door themselves and make some kind of conversation about anything except the post, then the postman will have something for them; others, the shyer, more introspective kind, having an idea that they can double-cross fate by not seeming to care enough to want to open the front door; and others again, the kind that get up late, not having any ideas at all except that now they have something to get up for.

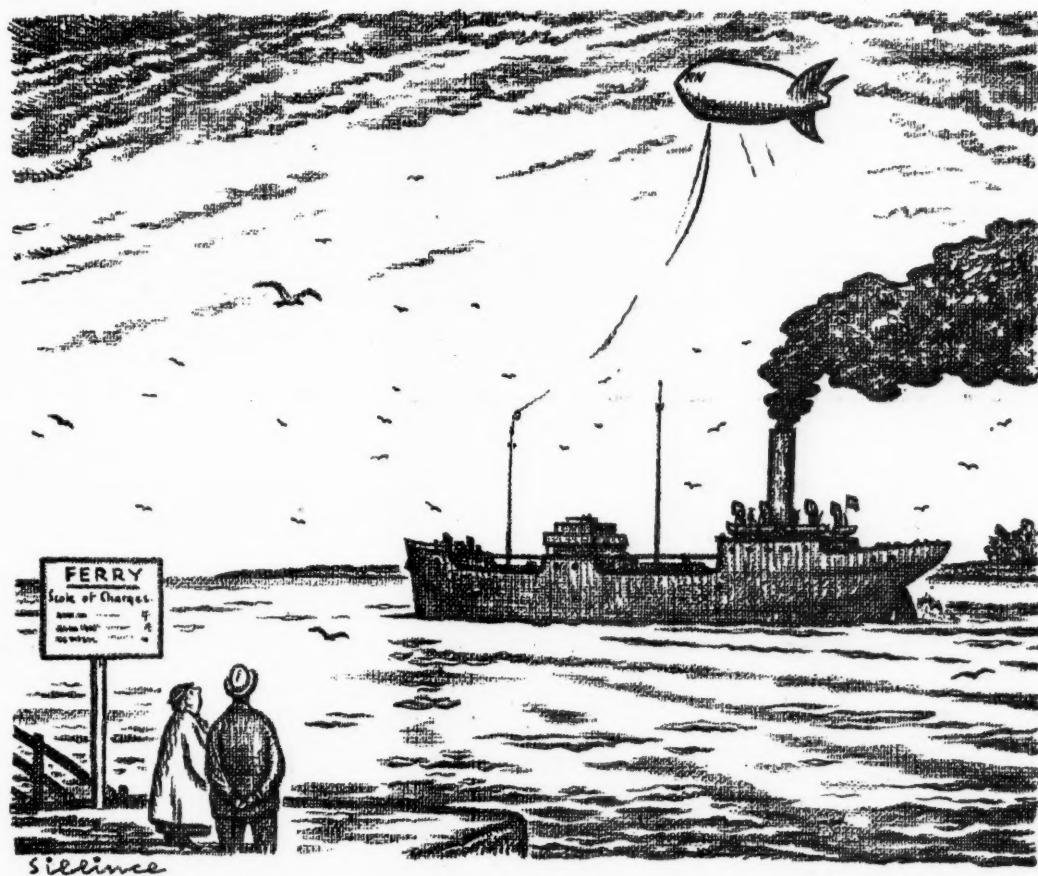
Now for the post itself. Assuming that it arrives at breakfast-time, it is brought into the dining-room by whoever fetched it, and whoever fetched it, as the other people in the room will notice at once, has got most of it. No one knows why this is, but there is an idea—stronger than anyone would admit—that this person handed most of the rest of it back to the postman. This person, being busy reading a letter and looking quite foolishly interested, hands anything extra to someone else, and that someone else divides it out into *that* person's post and the rest; and so it goes on till it is now divided into other people's and yours.

Other people's post of course is meaningless as soon as you know it *is* other people's. But your own, if there is enough of it, can now be sub-divided in all sorts of ways. You can first sub-divide it into postcards, typed envelopes and handwritten envelopes, and then you can sub-divide the last two into four: new, dark typing; tidy, sloping handwriting; handwriting which is either not tidy or not sloping; and old, faint typing. The first two are either bills, receipts and so on, or someone trying to frighten you; the third may be almost anything, and the fourth is from someone you haven't

written to for a year but have been feeling worse and worse about for the last month. (Another way of dividing them is by the colour of the stamps; but even after all this time people are not absolutely sure, when they see a penny stamp on an envelope, what the person who stuck it on is getting at.)

I expect you have all noticed those little wheel-things, or postmarks, half over the stamp and half next to it. No one is quite sure what they are for; the accepted theory is that by reading the postmark people can spread out the time it takes to open a letter; another is that a postmark checks up on those people—the ones who go in for old, faint typing—who date a letter earlier than they wrote it, just to look keen; another that it makes sure that everyone opens every letter, even bills, because the worst bills have postmarks which mean they came from the nicest part of London. Postmarks on postcards, of course, are necessary because they give some idea of where the person is writing from; the picture on the back doesn't, because a picture postcard bought in one town is hardly likely to be sent off before the person reaches another town.

As for reading the post, this is perhaps the most interesting part of all. Picture postcards are easy to read; they are held up and rotated to get the bits written up the side and then passed round the table and grunted at vaguely by the other people. Letters known to be bills, receipts and so on because they have been turned over and found not to be stuck up, are squeezed to make a gap, looked inside and put down again with some kind of wisecrack no one else takes much notice of. Ordinary letters, the handwritten kind which just go over the page, are read quite ordinarily by just going over the page. Long and faintly-typed letters are shaken out, looked suspiciously at the back page of to get the signature, and then propped up against anything on the table likely to be needed the next minute. People reading this kind of letter have always, I think, the same succession of reactions—guilt for the first half-paragraph (which is taken up in explaining why the person writing hasn't written before either), shading off before the end of the first page into a rough draft of the even better letter they themselves are going to write back by the very next post.



"I wonder where they're taking it."

Cosmo-Ballet

THE Lyric Theatre is the latest shrine of Terpsichore; her new votaries are the International Ballet Company and her High Priestess MONA INGLESBY.

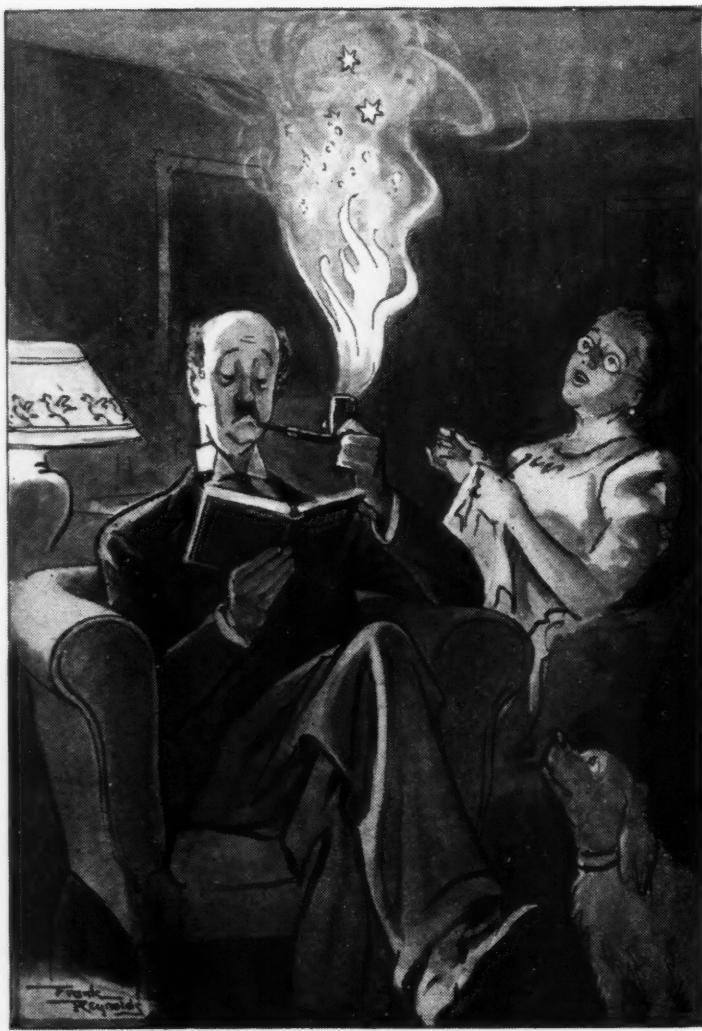
Their repertoire is largely new, but includes as a hall-mark *Les Sylphides* and *Le Lac des Cygnes* in its shortened version. These romantic classics are a great test for any company, particularly for the corps de ballet, and the performances left a good deal to be desired. The atmosphere too of both of them was spoiled by very ugly new décors. *Le Lac des Cygnes* was danced in a steely-blue gully flanked by stalagmites of what seemed to be phosphorescent coal—and the gully appeared to be in need of dredging,

for the departing property swan ran aground on some sub-aqueous obstacle and, in scuffling to free itself, nearly took the whole waterfront with it.

Of this Company's new productions, *Planetomania*, an extravaganza by MONA INGLESBY to music by NORMAN DEMUTH, is the most successful. A young scientist (HAROLD TURNER, in spectacles, a red wig and violet-velvet dressing-gown) invents an apparatus for communicating with the planet Venus, and to his surprise the star-spangled goddess herself appears in his observatory. He muddles the formula for her disappearance, so that his outraged wife and the maid disappear as well, to be wafted by Zephyrs to the

planet Venus. Miss DORIS ZINKEISEN designed the very effective décor and costumes. NINA TARAKANOVA (a coquettish Venus), HAROLD TURNER (the scientist), AILNE PHILLIPS (the wife) and MONA INGLESBY (the maid) over-act in a riotous style, and ROVI PAVINOFF is a romantic Adonis awaiting the return of Venus to the iced birthday-cake planet to which they are translated.

The ballet *Amoras*, by MONA INGLESBY to music by ELGAR (largely taken from the *Wand of Youth Suites*), is based on a fifteenth-century legend about a Knight who sold his Lady to the Devil. The legend is treated in a pale-blue fairy-tale style with delightful costumes by WILLIAM



"That's a new kind of tobacco, isn't it, dear?"

CHAPPELL. ROVI PAVINOFF is an agile and puckish Devil garbed in green and black, with fiery red locks, who carries off the white-robed Lady from her perfidious spouse; but she is saved by a statue of the Virgin who leaves her niche and its stained-glass window and, casting aside her cloak of blue, so frightens the Devil that he scurries away.

Endymion is a charming short ballet by the same choreographer to MOSZKOWSKI's music, with costumes by SOPHIE FEDOROVITCH. Mr. HAROLD TURNER should, however, re-design the choreography of his *Fête Bohème*,

for BERYL DEAN's colourful costumes and the back-cloth of peasant embroidery, combined with DVOŘAK's intensely vital nationalistic music, only emphasize its weakness. The music, the costumes, the dances of Bohemia spring from its very earth, and to introduce the conventional ballet style in place of the peasant dances in which the music has its origin is a solecism. The ballet-master, STANISLAS IDZIKOWSKI, has, however, excellent material in this Company, which deserves well of its audiences; and we shall watch its career with interest.

Digging for Victory

"HAVE you got anything buried in the garden, dear?" said Aunt Emma, with the utmost directness and addressing herself to Mrs. Pledge, although others were in the room at the time.

Mrs. Pledge looked startled and replied: "Only poor Fluff."

"That's not what I mean. I am thinking," said Aunt Emma, "of the invasion. Poor Fluff wouldn't be of any use at all in the invasion."

"Even if Fluff were still with us, one could hardly expect a cat of nearly nineteen years of age to repel an invasion," replied Mrs. Pledge. "Be reasonable, dear."

Mrs. Battlegate said that she thought Aunt Emma and Mrs. Pledge were at cross-purposes. Fluff, surely, had died many years earlier and could not at this stage be called upon in any way.

It was, as usual, Laura who combined levity with a wilful distortion of the truth by remarking that if Fluff were, as Mrs. Pledge had told us, buried in the garden, one must—in fairness to the Pledges—assume that he had died first.

"They wouldn't ever have buried him alive, surely," said Laura.

Had she deliberately asserted that they *would* have buried him alive, Mrs. Pledge could not have been more upset.

Ten minutes at least must have elapsed before she had finished explaining how she and Mr. Pledge abhorred cruelty in any shape or form, and how often they had said that Fluff was exactly like one of the family.

"Which one?" said Laura, fortunately very quietly. "Not Cyril, I hope."

And Mrs. Battlegate told a story of the General's Indian days, which was entirely to the effect that elephants never forgot.

When she had finished—and Mrs. Battlegate is by no means a rapid *raconteuse*—it was found that Mrs. Pledge was in tears and that Miss Littlemug had decided to come down on Aunt Emma's side, which one knew would lead to quite as much distress as though she hadn't—or perhaps even more.

She knew, she said, exactly what Aunt Emma meant, and she had herself dug a small shallow trench, two feet by one-and-a-half, and placed in it some tins of sardines and one of tomato soup, at the bottom of the garden.

She had planted a sunflower to mark the spot, but this had unfortunately come to nothing.

Miss Pin, speaking no doubt without reflection, advised a large stone instead.

"With an inscription: 'Food-cache here,'" suggested Laura. "I believe all the invaders are perfect linguists, so that ought to make it all easy for them."

She was—quite rightly—ignored by all.

"Personally," Cousin Florence remarked in a rather dim, remote kind of voice, "I have simply planted such seeds as I could obtain, and made up my mind to do without bulbs."

Mrs. Battlegate, with one of her rare and extraordinary smiles—said by Charles, who spent much of the last war in the Middle East, to bear a peculiar resemblance to that of a camel—made a statement about Vegetables for Victory and then admitted that the General had thought it advisable to place three large packing-cases, filled with tinned foods, in various parts of what Mrs. Battlegate called The Grounds.

It eventually turned out that practically everybody in Little Fiddle-on-the-Green had had more or less the same idea, and there must be, as Miss Pin pointed out, a good deal more food in the parish under the ground than above it.

Miss Dodge and Miss Plum, who had apparently started excavations almost at the same moment as the war began, admitted frankly to having buried tins of peas, peaches, fruit salad, sugar, chocolate and even asparagus, with a reckless abandon that they have since deeply regretted.

"In your place," said Miss Littlemug firmly, "I should, without hesitation, dig them all up again. After all, supposing the invaders pass you by, where will you be then?"

Miss Plum said that if the invaders passed them by they would obviously still be at home.

"And the tins will still be in the garden," said Laura blithely, "so you can get them all out and eat and eat and eat."

A long and rather strange look passed between Miss Plum and Miss Dodge.

It was the asthmatic Miss Dodge, who for reasons of health had taken no active part in the burial of the tins, who eventually revealed the flaw in the whole admirable scheme.

"Unfortunately," she said with a certain acidity, "none of us has ever been able to remember the exact spot in which they were buried."

E. M. D.

WITH THE EIGHT O'CLOCK NEWS!

EENEMY activity over this country last night was _____. Damage was done to a town in _____. of England. There were a number of houses destroyed. Civilian casualties were _____. "

For each and every occasion we try to be prepared to supply the needs of those new victims of enemy aggression; some lose all they possess and need all we are able to give them, and in the meantime hospitals and the fighting forces are eager for the support the PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND brings to them.

Will you please help to supply the most urgent needs? If you have helped us with contributions before will you please help us again? If this is your first introduction to the Fund will you please become a subscriber? Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.

Bridal Suite

WHEN our Group moved for an all-too-brief fortnight to Pierford-on-Sea, the officers were housed in the commandeered Imperial Hotel, a very comfortable place where, contrary to the usual practice when hotels are commandeered, neither the gas nor the electricity had been cut off.

The sappers and N.C.O.s were housed in the Parish Institute, whose walls were decorated with improving texts.

"It's not bad here," said Sapper Sympson rather wistfully, "but for the first time in my Army career I wish I were an officer. I particularly wish I



A JACKSON

were Lieutenant Flower, who occupies the bridal suite. There is a bath in green marble like something out of a Hollywood talkie, and the h. and c. actually work."

"How has Lieutenant Flower obtained the bridal suite," I asked, "when there are so many senior officers here?"

"Lieutenant Flower led the reconnaissance party," said Sapper Sympson, "and he is not a man to waste opportunities."

Next day, however, Sapper Sympson had further news.

"Poor Lieutenant Flower," he said, "has been ousted. He was foolish enough to boast about the marble bath in the presence of Captain Helby. An hour later he was evicted, and at this very moment Captain Helby is floating in the bath, reading Boswell's *Johnson* and inhaling the fragrant scent of pine. His batman spent a fevered half-hour searching the town for pine bath-salts and was at last successful."

Captain Helby's reign in the bridal suite was short. Perhaps Lieutenant Flower forgot that he was an officer and a gentleman, and told Major Rattigan about the marble bath to get his revenge on Captain Helby. More likely the Major just strolled innocently into the bridal suite to get Captain Helby's advice about the correct way to spell some word he wanted to use in Company Orders. Finding the Captain floating in the bath, in which he spent the greater part of his time, the Major became a victim of uncontrollable jealousy.

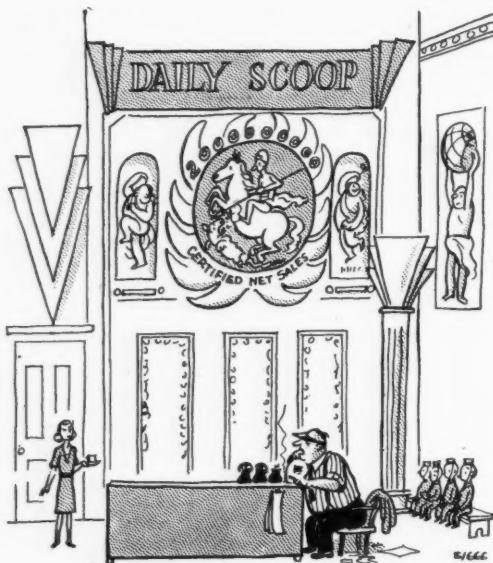
"Major Rattigan," reported Sympson next day, "now occupies the bridal suite and spends most of his time in the marble bath. His batman was able to obtain only 'Bouquet de Paris' bath-salts, instead of pine, but the Major does not seem to mind. He does not read. He just lies there and recites poetry. Mostly Omar Khayyám."

The Major held the suite for three days, and then the Colonel arrived and burst in on the Major just as that gallant officer was explaining, more truly than he knew, how "Sultan after Sultan, with his pomp, abode his destined hour and went his way."

The Major went his way the same evening, and the Colonel took over the bath. He used Hay's disinfectant instead of bath-salts. He smoked a pipe and read books on cricket.

His junior officers, taking brief unsatisfactory baths in spotted-yellow enamel, regarded him enviously.

Luckily for the morale of the Battalion the Brigadier has just announced his intention of spending a week with us.



"I'm sorry you can't speak to our military expert — he's been called up."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

World of Garden Cities

In the years between wars Great Britain carried through housing-schemes vaster and saner than those accomplished by any other country. In *Town and Country Planning* (FABER, 12/6) GILBERT and ELIZABETH GLEN McALLISTER have produced a volume that is full of accurate tabulated statement and is also a vision of a New Jerusalem set in "green and pleasant land." There are multitudes of people to-day determined to complete the work of reformers and bombers by finally rooting out the slums, and no better ally can be imagined than this book for the enthusiast who wants both to fire the imagination of an audience and to be helpfully provided with the unanswerable retort for the heckling unbeliever. The authors start from humanity's dual need to meet together in the social intercourse of the town and to find constant contact with unspoiled Nature in the fields, reaching town and country and work-place alike without unreasonable effort in travelling, and they point to Letchworth and Welwyn to show what can be done. They have a most righteous abhorrence for piling workers' homes one on top of another, and would correct both the upward strut and the outward sprawl of the great cities by breaking them up into self-contained units large enough to keep awake, small enough to keep sweet. The plan is reasonable, feasible and unboundedly attractive.

Refugees

Mr. ROBERT NATHAN, who has dealt effectively in his most delicate manner of realistic fancy with the modern exodus of the Jews, now turns to the civilians swept ahead by the totalitarian war-machine. *They Went On Together* (HEINEMANN, 6/-) puts the scene for convenience in America, but what happens to Mr. NATHAN's characters as they struggle along the dust-choked roads of the Middle

West is only what has happened already to the women and children and old men of Europe. Against a ghastly background of panic and muddle, of Stukas coming back to dive and dive again, of ruin and death, a mother and two children plod hungrily behind a rickety perambulator, joined by a little girl. The imaginative expression of their feelings by a writer of Mr. NATHAN's calibre is more moving than any bare list of atrocities, and the simple love-story of the boy and girl is charmingly told. When *Mom* says: "An awful lot of women are going to hate those people. All over the world . . . it would keep me awake nights, if I was them," that seems the last answer to the *blitzkrieg*.

Microcosm of England

When a couple of discerning Americans commissioned Miss MARGERY ALLINGHAM to depict her village in its war-throes they performed a capital service to ourselves. For *The Oaken Heart* (JOSEPH, 10/6) is not only an excellent domestic war book, it is deliberately a political document exhibiting a democratic community exercising in thought, word and deed its proper democratic functions of criticism and self-control. With distinguished because unpreceded honesty Miss ALLINGHAM presents her "Auburn"—not OLIVER GOLDSMITH's but an East Anglian one—from the August before Munich to the arrival of HESS. Inevitably there is a slight decline in dramatic interest after the peak of the evacuee episode: which has, oddly enough, never been publicly recognized as a major assault on English liberty which should have been suitably debated in advance by our accredited representatives. "Auburn" evinced no lack of practical sympathy; but Miss ALLINGHAM's generous version of the "paralysing discontent" of the town invaders is (as she means it to be) an indictment of the type of civilization it is sometimes proposed to perpetuate after the war. Statesmen who understand our ways will enjoy this book; mere politicians won't; and the great publics on both sides the Atlantic should revel in it.

Pomona Joins Up.

Plain Fruit Growing for Small Families (BLACK, 2/6) is a sound, compact and highly exhilarating little book. The newest and oldest knowledge are happily combined in it; and it steers a cautiously English middle course between the now slightly discredited "scientific" school and the old grower with his "honest muck." It tells you the best trees to plant for quick returns—those jolly little bushes and cordons on stocks chosen for dwarf growth and early



"I'm told Einstein invented it."



Lady. "WE ALWAYS KEEP THE HOSE READY, IN CASE OF A ZEPPELIN RAID."

Visitor. "BUT SURELY, MY DEAR, IT WOULD NEVER REACH THEM AT THE HEIGHT THEY FLY ?"

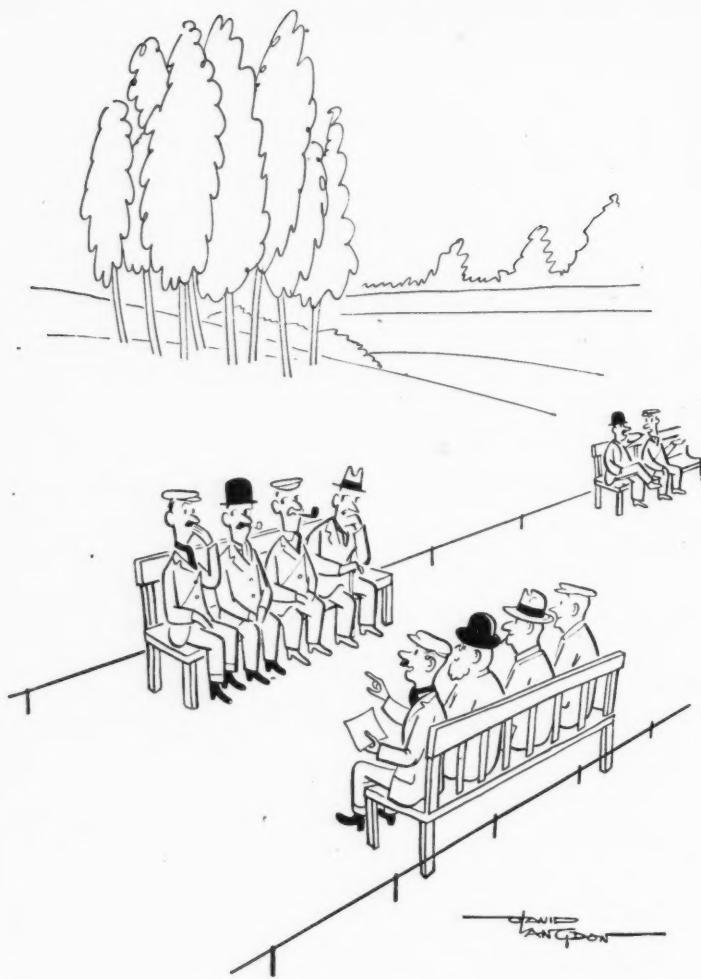
Claude A. Shepperson, September 15th, 1915

fertility. And it teaches you how to prune them as well as anyone can teach on paper without diagrams. Of course even so helpful an expert as Mr. GEORGE E. WHITEHEAD has his limitations. He doesn't list the best dessert gooseberries. He scorns the quince—a beautiful and accommodating tree which produces the perfect material for jelly on a site too damp for any other inmate of the orchard. He ignores Alpine Strawberries—which should be grown from seed, not from the nurseryman's expensive runners. And when he rightly insists that trained apples dislike hot walls he might have advocated their suitability for the ordinary suburban wattle fencing.

Mr. Armstrong and the War

"Margarets," Mr. ANTHONY ARMSTRONG'S Sussex home, must be almost as well and pleasantly known to his readers

as to its owners, for it plays a leading part in *Cottage into House* and *We Like the Country*, and now in *Village at War* (COLLINS, 8/-). We see the war's impact on "Margarets," more garden-ground dug up for food-crops, the arrival and departure of evacuees—with regret on both sides, be it noted—and so forth, but soon the Home Guard rather usurps the leading rôle. Almost all country-livers must recognize their own adventures in those of Mr. ARMSTRONG's home and village—the crashed German plane that melted so mysteriously into souvenirs, the tidal nature of the paper dump, and many other smaller matters; and since few Home Guards or villagers could make a record of their experiences at once so amusing and so sincere, this book will be something for all of them to enjoy and treasure. Like its forerunners it contains some excellent hints for amateur gardeners and has delicately humorous pen-and-ink illustrations by Mr. BERTRAM PRANCE.



"Now, then—Mr. Henspot: 'A tomato is a fruit.' True or false?"

Adastral Bodies

Between Two Worlds

IT was some time before the Officer Commanding No. 24 Recruits Centre, Somewhere in Wales, could decide how best to dispose of the roomful of freshly-plucked civilians. We sat there on our suitcases, waiting. After the first hour or so, when the buzz of polite comment on each other's domestic snapshots had spent itself, we continued to sit on in silence—hot, hungry, and secretly a little dispirited. We had travelled great distances in dirty trains, and our thoughts—some of them, at any rate—were turning wistfully towards hot baths.

There were one or two wits amongst us; a tremendous blond recruit with admirable teeth and a tattered trousers-

seat, showed signs of becoming the life of the party; but even when a white-haired old gentleman who passed the open door reading some scrap of paper evoked the deafening inquiry: "Gotcher calling-up papers, dad?" he failed to raise the laugh he deserved. There are times when the keenest sense of humour loses its edge.

Now and then we asked each other the time, or made some determinedly facetious comment on the personal appearance of the Station's N.C.O.s, but for the most part we sat with our chins on our hands, feeling our beards grow. These officials—the N.C.O.s—forced their way amongst us from time to time. They seemed put out to find

that we were still there, and we began to feel that we were being a nuisance to them. Had it not been for our avowed resolve to fly with the R.A.F. (or to clerk with them, or scrub with them, or peel potatoes or cook with them) we should probably have got up and gone away, just to save them trouble.

Eventually, no less a personage than a Service Policeman dropped in on us. We paid little attention, expecting him merely to utter the usual "Cor!" or "Struth!" and depart forthwith. To our amazement he actually addressed us. "What's you lot?" he asked suspiciously, fingering his revolver but noting with distaste that we were wearing our own clothes and thus not eligible for arrest. This was a big question, and we had scarcely begun to answer it when he thrust it aside with another.

"Where did you get your teas?"

His quick Service Policeman's eye had noted our enamel mugs and our knives, forks and spoons, prompting an obvious association of ideas. But for all his alertness he was noticeably shaken by the reaction to his few simple words. Like men possessed we sprang to our feet, waving our mugs and shouting hoarsely. We had had no teas; most of us had been dreaming of our teas for a couple of hours, and the frightful realization that we might, owing to some flaw in R.A.F. organization, be considered to have had them at some point in the past was more than we could endure.

"Quiet!" roared our visitor fiercely. "One at a — time! Where did you say you went?"

This was agonizing. Pandemonium broke out anew, only to die suddenly into a chorus of urgent shushings; we feared that our potential saviour, unable to sift anything intelligible from our gibberings, would give the thing up and go away never to return.

"Oh," said he—"so you 'aven't, eh?" And a great sigh swept the room. We had made ourselves clear. "Outside, then," said this delightful man, and the words had scarcely left his lips before our sojourning-place was bare of everything but dust and cigarette-butts ("dog-ends," these last are called) and a few civilian respirators in ragged cardboard-boxes. Outside in the road we stood in an expectant cluster, our parched lips curved in happy smiles.

The prospect of food is sustaining in itself. It must be, otherwise the two miles' march, the queue beside the three dustbins and the spectacle of the previous tea-party's washing-up being done in the simplest possible manner

must have combined to sap our already dwindled reserves of strength. Yet when an hour or so later we sat down at the trestle-tables to the meal which had been prepared for us, there was not one of our number who professed himself too weak to eat. The "drop of rough tea" (as a hatchet-faced man in corduroys critically described it) was well worth the trouble of fighting for as we passed the urn, and the portion of tinned fish, served for some obscure reason in a soup plate, made a dainty morsel for the homesick and travel-weary. There was no dearth of bread and margarine, and it was clear from one or two crimson-stained saucers dotted about on the tables that there had been, earlier in the day, jam. During the next few days of our stay at Somewhere-in-Wales, evidence of the recent presence of jam was constantly before us at meal-times, though the jam itself had always been carried off, curiously enough, by some previous feeding party. We never caught up with that jam, although once or twice we got near enough to see it being finished off on the next table by our uniformed colleagues. At first we thought that this must be the explanation—that privileges of this sort were reserved for fully-fledged airmen and that to-morrow, when we had our uniforms, we should have jam to go with them. But we never did.

As we have since discovered—though it should not, of course, have been a surprise to us—speed and efficiency are the dominant characteristics of the Service to which we are now bound. *Per ardua ad astra*, a grave young corporal assured us some days later, meant "Be quick and don't panic," a useful injunction to bear in mind. The system in force for the washing-up of our eating-irons at Somewhere - in - Wales provided an excellent example: on our way out we dipped them in a bucket, took care not to shake the drops of water on the floor, and put them in our pockets. Those of us who had at home always regarded the washing-up as one of the more exacting of the daily tasks, fell to wondering what all the fuss had been about. Nothing, after all, could be simpler than this.

The same simplicity was eventually to be found on all sides. Our billets, for example (when the corporal in charge of us had marched us to them by a circuitous route, his own knowledge of local geography being a trifle elementary), displayed the same lack of unessentials. The house which our own small party occupied ("not the bombed one—the one next door," as one of our many directors put it)

contained nothing but a number of bare black iron bedsteads. These, together with the blankets which we carried under our left arms, having acquired them on the way, were precisely what we needed; earlier in the day, true, some of us had been toying with the idea of hot baths, with possibly a glass or two of beer to follow, but we had mentioned both these things to the corporal and he had been much amused. There was no beer in Somewhere-in-Wales, he said, and if there were any hot baths it was fairly certain that we should not come across them. He was perfectly right, as corporals so often seem to be. There was indeed a bath in our billet, but it was not a hot one, and contained nothing more comforting than a few small pieces of coal.

But the beds, we all agreed (propping up the photographs of our wives on the windowsill), would console us for having to retire unwashed. Cleanliness might come near to godliness, but sleep—that would bring us to the very portals of paradise. . . .

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I Schpy!

Herr Nasenparke lectures Fifth Columnists on "How To Arrive."

FLOATING towards the County, do not steer your baraschut into the branches of some forests, not by any means. Alight as tenderly as may be conceived upon the meadows. Then count your englisch moneys, but negelekt eating your liversausage until

a later date, when perhaps you will be somewhat more hungered than you maybe then schall be.

Disguise your shortwavesender apparatal as best as can be by means of strewing greenstuff and vegetable along the top and dripping the aerial threads among oak and beech. Yet do not listen to the nearby nationals and regionals, being a Nazi, o no! lest you hear somewhat of importance to Germany.

Quickly be disguised in lokal toggs, that you may pass as not a stranger here yourself and scamper down to the path next along in order to slink along a village and find board and lodge all in, letting on that you are a stranger of Britisch stock, but in o such a fix, because of your car having downbroken and no benzin along the pathway, without koupons in any case, do you see, madam?

As soon as you are certain to be snog on return, skip stealthily backwards along to where you came to earth for the first time and diskover again your baraschut. Then schould you scrape the ground until you have a grave so much deep that the baraschut will be a great deal koncealed from the rostic gaze. Yet beware of the village platoons which may be vigilant all about for it would not do to become a katch-knapping redhanded, by no means, of course not!

Once more then enter the abode, with remarques on the fine old englisch air and call for the good fare provided, the fine victualistics such as steak with onions, and sup the local brew, recking naught of what it may be.

Furthermore on arrival is for another time in a lecture by me.



"This gives you some idea of the stupendous distances involved."

Evening Walk

A LOVELY evening for our walk," said my hostess. "We have three calls to make. I propose to go to Chubston's first, however, and change our library books. Will that suit you?"

"Admirably. And after Chubston?"

"Woost, about cutting the wisteria; Brittle, for the setting of Andalusians; Murke's, about the Parochial Council meeting and to try to get some plums. Good evening, Mr. Chubston. We would like two books. New ones if you have them. Oh, you have two of Hugh Walpole's. Good. We will borrow them. Oh, they are booked ten deep. Dear, dear. Walpole is so popular, isn't he? I will choose a book from my favourite second shelf—all Mrs. Henry Wood's and Trollope. One should be able to select something worth reading. I will have *Within the Maze*. It was my dear mother's favourite book, and I will read it once again for her sake . . . Oh, you have chosen *Pickwick*. One can always find pleasure in Dickens, cannot one, Mr. Chubston? Oh, you have never read any? How is your mother, Mr. Chubston? Frail, but so cheerful. I am so glad. I will come in and see her one day. Remember me to her, will you? Good evening, Mr. Chubston, good evening, Miss Panier . . .

"Mr. Chubston's mother is an interesting woman. She was left a widow with seven children. She started the manufacture of boiled sweets on a small scale, in her parlour window. Success followed. She

added wool, toys, grocery, drapery, and lastly ironmongery. Quite an emporium. Woansome, though twice the size of Prattle Parva, has not so prosperous a shop. We are proud of Chubston's . . .

"Good evening, Mrs. Brittle. How beautiful your poppies look! Oh, no, they are not my favourite flower either. They die so soon. Have you a setting of Andalusians or White Wyandottes? No, only Black Minorcas. They will do . . . How is Mr. Brittle? Poorly. Oh, I am sorry to hear that . . . I hope he will improve. Good evening, Mrs. Brittle.

"Brittle was the policeman here for thirty years. An interesting man. Austere but lenient. On one occasion he almost arrested a celebrated criminal. The criminal cycled through the village ten minutes before Brittle went on duty. The disappointment aged him.

"Mr. Chubston's mother wrote a History of Prattle Parva. The village was called Theofwig in Saxon times. A well eight hundred feet deep was where the schoolhouse stands. Filled in now, I imagine. The village was evidently a peaceful one. In 1566 a local poet wrote:

*'Soe on soe on from yeere to yeere
Doth nothing ever happen heere.'*

How different now, with our Scouts and Guides and new air-raid shelter!

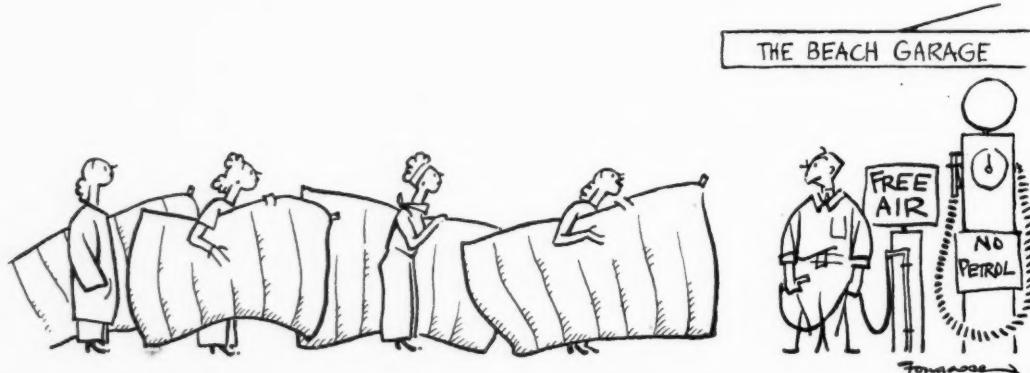
"Good evening, Mrs. Woost. I came to ask when your husband can come and cut the wisteria over the

Rectory porch. Not this week? Dear, dear, I am sorry for that. The wisteria makes the hall quite dark. Oh, no, I know people cannot be expected to do impossibilities. Is he harvesting or haying? Neither of them. Well, please ask him to come as soon as he possibly can . . . Good evening, Mrs. Woost . . .

"Woost was one of five hundred people chosen by a rheumatism cure company to have his photograph taken as having been cured. Dear, dear, the excitement was extraordinary. They took his photograph sitting outside his cottage. His full name and address, Adam Abel Woost, 2 Humid Cottages, Riverside. Even now people make an excuse to go by and look in . . . Since then he has been quite intolerable. The publicity went to his head. Probably he was in bed and listened to our conversation from the window.

"The Rector could easily get a ladder and cut the wisteria himself, but Woost has always done it and the village would comment if he did not. Besides, Mrs. Woost is Ada's second cousin.

"That is Mrs. Murke singing at 'Dovedale.' The Rector says she would wake the Seven Sleepers. He has definitely banned 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' while she attends our church. Dear, dear, how incautious of me! Farmer Subsell's fields are the other side of this lane, and he may be cutting oats. Not only is he Mrs. Murke's brother, but he is also Ada's grandfather . . ."



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